CWS/CMS Strategic Plan Update
December 2003

In December 2003, the CWS/CMS Oversight Committee reviewed the Strategic Plan to identify accomplishments, plan priorities, and assess the need to add or delete any strategies, projects, or initiatives. Members of the Oversight Committee and the regular State staff participants in the Oversight Committee participated in the review. In addition, county regional CWS/CMS user group chairs and co-chairs participated in the process.

No strategies, technical projects, or policy initiatives were added or deleted. Items completed were identified. Some project descriptions were modified to reflect ongoing activities and/or make them more specific. Projects and initiatives were discussed and, where appropriate, priority categories were revised. Changes resulting from the review process are identified in bold print in the attached Strategic Plan Update.

Strategies, Technical Projects, and Policy Initiatives

The CWS/CMS Oversight Committee has developed eleven Strategies, listed on the following pages, to accomplish the CWS/CMS Goals. Some of these Strategies are specific to one Goal, while others will contribute to achieving all three Goals. The Strategies are numbered for reference purposes only; the numbers do not indicate priority.

The Committee has also identified specific action steps that will be taken to implement these eleven Strategies. These action steps are called Technical Projects and Policy Initiatives. Each supports only one Strategy, so they are listed under the relevant Strategy on the following pages (with one exception – an Initiative that supports both Strategy 1 and 10 is listed under both, as indicated in the text). Each Technical Project and Policy Initiative has been assigned a priority ranking (Critical, High, Medium, or Low Priority), as shown in the column to the right.

Approach:

As major changes are made to CWS/CMS, we will, whenever possible:

− Review SCRs and incorporate requests for changes that relate to the major change or release;

− Consider ways to expedite data entry, e.g., reducing or consolidating the data entry requirements and identifying opportunities to auto-populate data from other systems;

− "Break off" portions of the application, making them modular in order to make it easier to enter data and to allow modules to be updated more expeditiously; and

− Reconfigure these portions of the application into a distributed application architecture (e.g., making them Web-enabled, browser based).

Strategy 1 - Increase ease of data entry and enhance the value of the system to users.

Technology Projects

A. Simplify data entry through applets that require fewer screens, bring down less data and thus expedite entry.	*Critical*
B. Develop additional ways to enter data and documents via scanners, digital cameras, voice recognition, and so forth.	*High*
C. Assess and implement ways to reduce or eliminate occurrences of optimistic concurrency conflicts in all future system improvements and releases.	*High*
D. Research options to enable users to access new information without closing out the current case (e.g., multiple cases open and the ability to quickly save them when a new case is being opened).	*High*
E. Increase system flexibility to allow counties to enter data more efficiently (e.g., identify business rules that might be suspended to allow partial entry of data, flexible order of data entry, and so forth).	*High*
F. Ensure data in state databases is accessible via CWS/CMS (e.g., CalSERVE, schools, MEDS).	*Medium*
G. Allow selected other user groups to have limited access into CWS/CMS to enter data (e.g., Mental Health staff or County Counsel).	***High***

H. Define protocols for rights and access to data (i.e., security access privileges). (Note: this item is the same as Initiative 10-T).	*High*
I. Educate users regarding optimistic concurrency.	*Completed Ongoing*
J. Develop user incentives and recognition for those that use the system fully.	*Low*
K. Advocate for a common client identifier within CDSS and with other departments and entities. **Policy is completed.**	*Medium*

Strategy 2 – Increase the functions and capabilities of the system to better support users.

Technology Projects

A. Improve functionality in Placement Services.	*Critical*
B. Improve capabilities for creating and formatting court reports, case plans, etc.	*Medium*
C. Implement priority SCRs in each CWS/CMS code release.	*Completed Ongoing*
D. Improve functionality in Adoptions Case Management (per SACWIS). **This project is in progress.**	*Critical*
E. Improve functionality in the Independent Living Program (ILP) **including post emancipation tracking**.	*High*
F. Provide multi-lingual case plans **and court reports**.	*High*
G. Improve functionality in transmitting documents directly from CWS/CMS (e.g., without creating additional documents in other applications).	*Medium*
H. Improve functionality in Probation IV-E Foster Care payments (per SACWIS requirements).	*Critical*
I. Improve functionality in Health and Education Passport (HEP). **This project is in process.**	*High*
J. Assess and improve the usefulness and timeliness of automatic reminders for case management activities, due dates, etc.	*Medium*

Policy Initiatives

K. Develop mutually agreed-upon data completion standards for the inter-county transfer of electronic case files.	*Completed*
L. Establish minimum standards for data uniformity and accuracy, e.g., data definitions, naming conventions, data mapping, data dictionary, and so forth.	*High*
M. Work with the Judicial Council to establish a policy that CWS/CMS-generated court reports and forms will be accepted under Rule of Court.	*High*
N. Advocate for Judicial Council acceptance of electronic transmission and electronic signatures.	*High*
O. Work with the legislature to ensure that new legislation and mandates are implemented in a timeframe consistent with updates to the CWS/CMS system.	*Critical*

Strategy 3 - Make the CWS/CMS system available wherever needed.

Technology Projects

A. Develop infrastructure to support out-of-office access, including technology and staff support (e.g., Web-based, PDAs, laptops, wireless, faster access via systems like dial-up, broadband, satellite).	*Critical*

Strategy 4 - Improve the ease and capability of reporting and accessing data from the CWS/CMS system.

Technology Projects

A. Provide standardized reports showing county and State outcomes as defined by the Adoptions, Safe Families Act (ASFA), **AB 636 and the Program Improvement Plan (PIP)**.	*Critical*
B. Provide the ability to produce standard and customized reports needed by staff at all levels.	***Completed***
C. Provide easy access to information that is helpful to each type of user: standardized queries, reports, real-time data, on-line support, and so forth.	*Critical*

Policy Initiatives

D. Identify critical-outcome issues; demonstrate the value of the CWS program through reports on those outcomes.	***Completed***

Strategy 5 - Move to and maintain the most flexible, cost-effective architecture.

Technology Projects

A. Assess the feasibility of, and where feasible proceed with, moving major portions of the current CWS/CMS application from the desktop to the server (i.e., from a *fat client* to a *thin client* technical architecture).	*Critical*

Strategy 6 - Keep hardware and software sufficiently up-to-date to run the application efficiently.

Technology Projects

A. Update CWS/CMS hardware consistent with the CWS/CMS State Technology Maintenance Plan. **Sever hardware/operating system and PC/Laptop replacement projects are underway.**	*Critical*
B. Improve the Moves, Adds and Changes (MAC) process to more quickly respond to county needs.	***High***

Policy Initiatives

C. Update the CWS/CMS Annual **Maintenance** Plan to ensure that hardware and software are up-to-date so as to run the CWS/CMS application effectively, and coordinate CWS/CMS with other applications in use in the counties.	*High*

Strategy 7 - Provide timely and effective user support.

Policy Initiatives

A. Ensure CWS/CMS support staff are knowledgeable in all applications (e.g., Microsoft Office and Windows 2000).	*Medium*
B. Make expanded on-site support available, as needed, during major changes such as code drops and equipment changes.	*Medium*
C. Support lower customer-to-system support staffing ratios (25:1 vs. 50:1).	*Medium*

Strategy 8 - Fully train users.

Technology Projects

A. Based on the results of the training survey in Initiative 8B below, expand and improve web-based, self-directed interactive training.	*Critical*

Policy Initiatives

B. Survey users regarding their training needs and the quality of the training they receive.	***Completed Ongoing***
C. Make available multi-modal, multi-level targeted training to the counties for initial and ongoing training needs.	***Completed Ongoing***
D. Advocate with California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) and colleges/universities to integrate CWS/CMS system training into Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and IV-E Masters of Social Work (MSW) curriculum.	*High*

Strategy 9 - Improve communication with users, keeping them involved, informed, and prepared.

Technology Projects

A. Provide county Web access to existing System Change Requests (SCRs) in the Request Tracking System (RTS).	***Completed***
B. Provide county Web access to status of CWS/CMS Help Desk tickets.	*High*

Policy Initiatives

C. Ensure communication among the CWS/CMS Oversight Committee, regions, and counties.	***Completed Ongoing***
D. Review and enhance the structures and mechanisms to actively seek user input about system changes, enhancements, and upgrades.	***Completed Ongoing***
E. Improve the process for feedback from Regional Groups to the CWS/CMS Oversight Committee on a regular basis, regarding user satisfaction with the system overall, and with system changes/upgrades.	***Completed Ongoing***
F. Enhance two-way communication between decision-makers and users regarding the CWS/CMS decision-making process for system changes.	*Critical*
G. Improve communication to enhance County Director/Manager support from top county management for CWS/CMS.	*High*
H. Review and streamline the communication process to stakeholders, including users, control agencies, and the legislature.	***Critical***

Strategy 10 - Create more effective linkages to other programs and systems.

Technology Projects

Receive, provide, and share or exchange data with:

A. IV-E Eligibility and Benefits system (per SACWIS requirements).	*Critical*
B. TANF IV-A system including financial management (per SACWIS requirements).	*Critical*
C. Medi-Cal (Title XIX) system (per SACWIS requirements).	***Critical***
D. Work with CDSS Community Care Licensing Division to modify the Licensing Information System (LIS) to more effectively provide data to CWS/CMS.	*High*
E. Criminal Law Enforcement Tracking System (CLETS).	*Medium*
F. Department of Justice (DOJ) Child Abuse Registry system.	*Medium*
G. Local Dependency Court systems.	*Medium*
H. Child Support system (per SACWIS requirements).	***Critical***
I. Public Health systems.	*Low*
J. Local Education systems.	*Low*
K. Local Probation systems.	*Low*
L. Mental Health programs.	*Low*
M. Local Law Enforcement systems.	*Low*
N. Workforce Investment Act (WIA).	*Low*
O. Drug and Alcohol programs.	*Low*
P. Probation Case Management.	*Low*
Q. In-Home Support Services (IHSS) system.	*Low*
R. Adult Protective Services (APS) systems.	*Low*
S. General Assistance Programs.	*Low*

Policy Initiatives

T. Define protocols for rights and access to data (e.g. security access privileges). (Note: this item is the same as Initiative 1-H above.)	*Critical*
U. Engage with LIS regarding the need to improve LIS and its ability to provide data to CWS/CMS.	*High*
V. State will take the lead to ensure rules defining confidentiality are appropriate to the automated environment and are applicable to any external users who can access CWS/CMS.	*High*
W. Develop policies and data entry protocols (e.g., language, definitions, steps, requirements, network and middleware) for other entities entering data into CWS/CMS.	*High*
X. Proactively work with new technology systems as they are being developed to ensure data transfers and compatibility with CWS/CMS.	***Critical***

Strategy 11 - Maximize the support of external stakeholders and those entities who fund the Child Welfare Services program and CWS/CMS.

Policy Initiatives

A. Continue to advocate for sufficient funding to implement the Strategic Plan.	*Critical*
B. Encourage counties to utilize CWS/CMS customizable standard reports and data to support local funding proposals and program initiatives.	*High*
C. Publicize positive outcomes (system accomplishments, individual contributions, and CWS successes based on system information).	*High*
D. Work with the legislature to ensure that new legislation/mandates are accompanied with the funding required to make changes/updates to the CWS/CMS system.	*Critical*